

## U.S. House Adopts Resolution to Promote Service-Learning

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WASHINGTON, DC &ndash; Bipartisan legislation to promote community service and student learning across America passed the U.S. House of Representatives Wednesday. The legislation, H. Res 769, was introduced by Congressman Todd Platts (PA-19) and his fellow co-chairs of the National Service Caucus, Representatives Doris Matsui (D-CA-5), David Price (D-NC-4) and Vernon Ehlers (R-MI-3).

Service-learning is a teaching method that integrates academic content with a meaningful community service activity. By providing real world experiences to support academic concepts, service-learning brings learning to life and helps increase academic achievement, connects youth to adult role models and helps youth become solutions to our nation's challenges. Learn and Serve America, established under the National and Community Service Act of 1990, oversees the federal government's service-learning efforts and engages more than one million youth in service-learning programs annually. From October 5-11, 2009, the annual National Learn and Serve Challenge will spotlight the value of service-learning to young people as well as schools, college campuses, and communities, while encouraging others to launch service-learning activities

"Service-learning gives students the opportunity to contribute to their community by integrating community service projects with classroom learning," said Congressman Platts. "This program helps students not only learn about democracy and citizenship, but helps them become actively contributing citizens and community members through the service they perform."

"Learn and Serve America impacts both the service participants and the communities they serve," said Congresswoman Matsui. "A number of independent studies evaluating the program and assessing its impact on participants have been undertaken over the last several years. All have come to the same conclusion: Learn and Serve America has an enormously positive impact on participants' civic attitudes and involvement in volunteer service. This is

an important program for our country and our communities, and this Congress has demonstrated a true commitment to the spirit of service in recent months, and will continue to foster service opportunities for America's youth in the coming years."

"Service-learning allows students to apply classroom content and problem-solving skills to identified community or school needs," Congressman Price said. "This not only enhances the community, but provides a powerful learning experience for our young people."

"Encouraging young people to engage in service gives them a greater understanding of, and appreciation for, their community, and provides a real-world setting in which they can learn," said Congressman Ehlers. "Service-learning programs help students succeed academically, and also enables them to become valuable contributors to the well-being of their community. Furthermore, "Once a volunteer, always a volunteer." Giving students a good start means they will likely be volunteers for life."

"Service-learning is a key strategy for meeting many of our nation's most important goals -- from improving academic achievement and increasing civic engagement to helping youth from disadvantaged circumstances succeed in school and in life," said Nicola Goren, Acting CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service. "We thank the bipartisan sponsors of this resolution and the organizers of the Learn & Serve Challenge for recognizing that service-learning has a vital role to play in enhancing academic outcomes for our students and youth and putting millions of young people on a lifelong path of citizen service."

Learn and Serve America engages over 1.1 million students in service at a cost of about \$25 per student. It also leverages a dollar for dollar match from grant recipients and previous cost-benefit analyses done for the program show a much higher return in benefits for participating students and communities.

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